

**Certified Mail
& Regular Mail**

101-912
2019-2020

September 3, 2019

Ms. Grenita Lathan, Superintendent
Ms. Diana Davila, Board President
Houston Independent School District
4400 W. 18th St.
Houston, TX 77092

RE: Potential Statutory Actions Required Due to Campus Performance Ratings

Dear Ms. Lathan and Ms. Davila:

The purpose of this correspondence is to notify Houston Independent School District ("ISD" or "district") of the action that I may be required to take based upon the final 2019 academic performance rating assigned to the Wheatley High School campus ("campus"). As you are aware, on August 17, 2017, I notified the district that based upon the assignment of the 2017 preliminary academic performance rating of *Improvement Required* to Wheatley High School, if the campus received final 2017 and 2018 unacceptable performance ratings, pursuant to Texas Education Code (TEC) §39A.111, I would be required to order either the appointment of a board of managers to govern the district as provided by TEC §39A.202 or closure of the campus. Wheatley High School received a final 2017 academic performance rating of *Improvement Required*.

In August 2017, many school districts, including Houston ISD, were directly affected by Hurricane Harvey. To address this, the agency established a Hurricane Harvey provision and eligibility criteria under which school districts, open-enrollment charters schools, and campuses directly affected by Hurricane Harvey would receive special evaluation in the 2018 accountability system. As Houston ISD was eligible for the provision, the district and all campuses received a rating of *Not Rated: Harvey Provision*. As stated in Chapter 10 of the *2018 Accountability Manual*, for purposes of counting consecutive years, 2017 and 2019 ratings would be considered consecutive for school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and campuses receiving a *Not Rated* label in 2018 due to hurricane-related issues.

On August 15, 2019, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) issued preliminary 2019 academic performance ratings indicating that Wheatley High School received a preliminary rating of *F*, representing the seventh consecutive unacceptable rating assigned to the campus, and the third unacceptable rating assigned to the campus after it was ordered to submit a turnaround plan.

The district has the ability to appeal the preliminary academic accountability rating assigned to Wheatley High School. Appeals are projected to be resolved in December, at which time the district will be notified of the final rating assigned to the campus. If the preliminary unacceptable academic performance rating assigned to Wheatley High School becomes a final rating, I will be required by TEC §39A.111 to order either campus closure or the appointment of a board managers and will notify the district of my specific decision in future correspondence.

Sincerely,

Mike Morath
Commissioner of Education

MM/lm

cc: Dr. Pam Wells, Executive Director, Region 4, Education Service Center
Jeff Cottrill, Deputy Commissioner, Governance & Accountability, TEA
Mike Meyer, Deputy Commissioner, Finance, TEA
Leo Lopez, Associate Commissioner/Chief School Finance Officer, TEA
Cory Green, Associate Commissioner, Grants and Compliance Oversight, TEA
Joe Siedlecki, Associate Commissioner, Innovation & Charters, TEA
Von Byer, General Counsel, TEA
Christopher Jones, Senior Legal Counsel, TEA
Lizette Ridgeway, Director, School Improvement, TEA
Jason Hewitt, Director, Monitors & Conservators, TEA